

A rural revival

Han Yu living a fast-paced life in Shanghai before she and her husband decided to escape to Lao Jie, Anhui Province and set up a rural inn. The couple's retreat inspired many visitors, among whom were the amateur poets Ou Ning and Zuo Jing.

Last year, Ou and Zuo settled on neighboring Bishan village as the perfect rural community for their project. Their "Bishan Commune" is an attempt to help the villagers find pride in their community, reclaim their heritage and cultivate an interest in the arts.

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Novak Djokovic, the men's singles winner and Victoria Azarenka, women's singles champion in the finals
CFP Photos

China Open brings tennis to the masses

By Zhao Hongyi

The world's top tennis players are returning home after two weeks of intense competition at the China Open.

The event, which ended October 8, inspired many Chinese people to learn about tennis.



(Left) Victoria Azarenka and Maria Sharapova at their award ceremony



(Right) Novak Djokovic dances Psy's "Gangnam Style" after the final against Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France.

Top winners appreciated

World No. 2 Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic overcame Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France 7-6 (4) and 6-2 on Sunday, taking home the prize purse of \$530,570.

Djokovic, who missed the last year's China Open due to injury, entered this year's tournament 14-0 at this event, and his win puts intense pressure on World No. 1 Roger Federer.

Victoria Azarenka from Belarus, the women's No. 1, defeated Maria Sharapova, the No. 2 from Russia, 6-3, 6-1, collecting the winner's prize of \$848,000.

It was the fourth time Azarenka came to Beijing to vie for the title and her first time at the new National Tennis Stadium.

"I'm really happy to have had such a good result because I've been coming here the last four years," Azarenka said.

At the award ceremony,

Djokovic and ball kids performed the dance from "Gangnam Style," a Korean music video that has gone viral on the Internet.

Despite her loss, Sharapova remained the favorite of Chinese spectators, many of whom are fans of her beauty, health, manners and skills.

Sharapova had nothing but praise for her opponent after the women's final.

"Victoria played an amazing match today," she said. "She did many things better than I did. There's a reason she is No. 1 in the world right now."

More Chinese spectators

Li Na, champion of the French Open in 2011, was the first Chinese tennis player to compete in the China Open.

Although Sharapova knocked her out in the semi-finals, Li's match filled the 15,000-seat stadium to a record 70 percent.

Zhang Ze, a 22-year-old player, entered the quarterfi-

nals in this year's China Open after defeating World No. 11 Richard Gasquet, who went on to lose to Germany's Florian Mayer.

It was the ninth year the China Open was held, ranking a tier behind the Grand Slams and end-of-season WTA Championships in prestige.

The competition has helped bring tennis from being an elite sport to a popular event in the country.

All the players said they appreciated the increasing number of Chinese spectators and the civilized manner in which they watched the game.

The total number of spectators broke 300,000, surpassing the record of 261,000 set last year. Home viewers were able to see all the matches on CCTV-5 and BTv's sports channel.

The popularity of the China Open surpassed many other popular TV programs like news broadcasts, talent com-

petitions and variety shows.

Opening to the world

During the China Open, organizers and sponsors organized many tennis-related events around the city.

Among them was China Open Wireless, a contemporary art exhibition spread throughout the competition venue. Selected works showcased the cutting-edge, rapid transformation and development of Beijing, as well as the nine-year history of the China Open.

Another program, the China Open Carnival, helped to educate Chinese spectators about the sport and encourage teens and children to play. The competition venue also offered opportunities to sing, dance and study tennis.

"I like the carnival events because they allowed me to forget about the heavy pressure of my schoolwork," said Li Ninghao, a 10-year-old student.

Li has come to watch the competition every year over the past five years with his parents during the National Holiday.

The China Open was advertised along Beijing's Third, Fourth and Fifth Ring roads. The stadium, which is located along Fifth Ring Road, caused traffic jams every day.

Attendance by celebrity entertainers such as Jiang Wen, Liu Xiaoqing and NBA players Stephon Marbury and Allen Iverson brought even more attention to the competition.

Zhang Junhui, press officer of China Open, said the China Open has grown as expected by the organizers.

"It shows tennis and its culture can be received here and enjoy the same popularity as table tennis," he said.

Meanwhile, the ATP Shanghai Master Cup started on October 7. It will conclude on October 14.

Little Donkey Farm founder begins new project

By Annie Wei

Shi Yan, founder of Little Donkey Farm, has begun a new farming project that she hopes will further expand community-supported agriculture (CSA).

Shi spoke about her experience starting Shared Harvest as part of UCCA's series of cultural events last Sunday.

In 2008, as a PhD student from People's University, Shi went to the US to study community supported agriculture (CSA). When she returned to China two years later, her first project was Little Donkey Farm.

It grew to 81 hectares in size, which is remarkable considering most farmers in China only have 1 to 2 hectares of land.

Little Donkey Farm attracted national attention – it was featured in more than 300 media outlets – for its ideas of healthy and sustainable farming. It also raised the quality of life of local farmers who were part of the program.

But even though the cost of running the farm was low, Shi decided she wanted a new challenge.

That's when she and eight others started Shared Harvest, a scaled down version of Little Donkey Farm.

Shared Harvest aims to be an easily duplicable model for farmers who want to team up to do cooperate farming under the CSA format. The problem with Little Donkey Farm is that it is owned by People's University, and is so big that visitors are often overwhelmed. Shared Harvest will try to create farms in manageable sizes, and more of them.

At first, it was difficult to get consumers. "Trust was a big



Shi speaks at UCCA about her experience starting Shared Harvest.

issue," Shi said. People didn't know what CSA was.

Locals were also skeptical about the team's intentions. Many people from the city are "weekend farmers" who go to rural areas on weekends to have fun, but they are not normally serious about farming.

"First you have to work on how to be accepted by the villagers," Shi said. "The good thing is, once they accept and trust you, your work will probably become easier."

Starting one's own farm as a business also presents other difficulties. Electricity can be spotty, and can cost three times as much in rural as urban areas.

Shi's team contacted big companies such as IBM and went to international schools to give lectures and increase awareness. With the support of IBM, the company was able to get a dozen family consumers to sign on.

"Uncle Lang", a farmer in his 50s from Tongzhou was the first to buy in.

In May, Shi and her team moved to Lang's village.

Lang has been farming for

20 years, and is also interested in CSA as a way of providing healthy food.

"We chose to work with local farmers instead of renting a place to start our own farms," Shi said.

As CSA requires prepaying, consumers and farmers share the same risk. Still, Lang expects to earn twice the amount he made last year.

But Shi said that Lang and his family now work 10 times harder.

Last year, they only planted wheat. This year, they grew 20 kinds of vegetables.

The son, a 25-year-old, decided to stay in the village to help.

"He is now the only young farmer left in the whole village," Shi said.

However, the future isn't necessarily bright: the nearby land has been used as a landfill by the municipal government.

Shi asked the villagers if they were bothered or concerned about the village's future.

"Why be bothered if no one will be living here in the future?" they replied.

It was a sad answer, but also a sign of better times – their children had gone off to work in the city.

Shi said her team aims to provide services to CSA farmers and consumers while helping locals lead better lives.

She wants to work out a way for CSA to be duplicated, easily and quickly.

Her new project includes 200 family consumers. The average vegetable price is 13 yuan per 500 grams, covering labor costs.

"It's important that farmers have the right to negotiate pricing," Shi said.



A Little Donkey Farm activity



Farmers dividing vegetables



A farmer working in Shi's farm



Photos provided by Shi Yan

Creating the spark for r

By Bao Chengrong

A poet couple's trip to a village in Anhui Province has sparked a new interest in rural construction.

Their friends have created the "Bishan Commune" to encourage intellectuals to return to the countryside to revitalize education and public life.

Pioneer of restoration

Han Yu wakes up at 6 am and cycles around the field in Bishan village to start her day. After that, she answers calls from backpackers who want to visit the Pig's Inn.

Listed in *Lonely Planet*, the Pig's Inn attracts guests from all over the world, many of whom have imitated Han in buying up old homes.

Unlike modern hotels, the three Pig's Inns do not stand out. Their ancient construction materials have been preserved, and the interior decor is carefully designed to blend with the original design.

Eight years ago, Han lived a "no-morning" life in Shanghai. One day, she decided to search for a better place to live. Together with husband Zheng Xiaoguang, Han decided to visit Lao Jie, Anhui Province. To them, it was a living scene from the famous Song Dynasty painting "Along the River During the Qingming Festival."

The commercialized Lao Jie was a disappointment.



(Left to right) Zuo Jing, Han Yu and Ou Ning
Photo provided by Ou Ning

Then they headed to Xidi, a beautiful village Han used to sketch. They spent 90,000 yuan to buy a 400-year-old home that had been converted into a pigpen. It took Han half a year to find the owner, a professor at Fudan University. Restoration took another two years.

Her effort went unknown until the mayor of Huangshan visited Han's house on one of his trips to Yi County. The mayor was excited to see a French style rural house in Xidi and said, "This is just the one I want." Endless streams of visitors began to visit, and Han decided to convert it into a rural inn.

Inspired by the success of the Pig's Inn, many villagers found new value in their old homes. They stopped chopping up their homes and decided to form their own rural inns.

But the tourism boom proved a nightmare

for Han. The local government began charging entrance fees to all the visitors, and it used the money to rip down the peach groves at the village entrance and replace them with tacky new structures.

The original Xidi was gone.

Han decided to move to the nearby Bishan village and try again. She bought a 200-year-old house from four farmers and an abandoned oil company, turning them into the second and third Pig's Inns.

Han decided the new restorations would follow strict rules. To keep the homes in harmony with the rest of the village, she limited them to two floors and rejected a plan by a famous lighting designer. The walls in each room would be made of packed earth.

"You have to respect the language of a house rather than destroy it. Every old building has a soul, and you must reflect on it and understand it before trying to change it," Han said.

Without any regulatory authority, Han worried that it would be a disaster if officials allowed farmers to tear apart and modernize their homes.

"I love the free atmosphere around this

land. I want local people of their hometown. I be willing to stay and construction," Han said.

"If countryside become why would they want to

News that two pieces to property developers was afraid they would cement building and not

"The countryside show you see the moon when fireflies when you look scent of bark and wake blers," she said.

"If the countryside in every direction, then how the city?"

Bishan Commune
Amateur poets Ou Ning

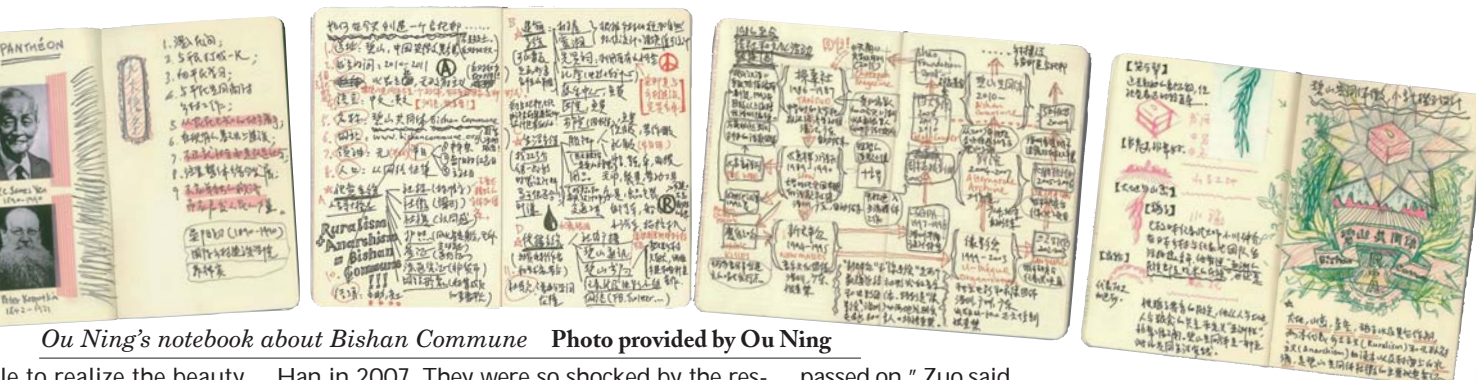


1. Natural scenery of Bishan
2. Village children listen in the poetry class
3. Villagers prepare for the 2011 Bishan Harvestival
4. Wutiaoren performs at the 2011 Bishan Harvestival
5. Villagers on the first day of the 2011 Bishan Harvestival

1.5 photo provided by Han Yu 2.3.4 photo provided by Ou Ning



rural rejuvenation



Ou Ning's notebook about Bishan Commune Photo provided by Ou Ning

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Han in 2007. They were so shocked by the restoration of Pig's Inn that they also bought their own houses.

They had visited many villages in Anhui Province before deciding Bishan was the perfect place to build their dream.

Unlike Xidi and Hongcun, Bishan is free of heavy tourism. Because its people take pride in their history, they received strong support from the Yi County government for rural development that would foster culture and the arts.

To celebrate, they held an event called the Bishan Harvestival in August last year. Local residents attempted to recreate forgotten ceremonies based on the descriptions of the village's elders, and local craftspeople displayed more than 100 sculptures made of wood, brick or stone.

"Traditional handicrafts were lost only because there was no market. If there is a profit to be made from their work, their skills will be

passed on," Zuo said.

Zuo was inspired by film director Zhang Yimou, who once hired hundreds of woodworkers to act in his film. The film made them famous, and encouraged them to continue their craft.

Ou and Zuo also offered poetry lessons during the event, inviting famous writers to teach the village children. Zuo was impressed with a verse by one of the children: "Stepping out of the room and standing in the empty ancestral hall, I feel deep."

Zuo said the influence of even short-term poetry instruction would be significant.

They also invited the folk rock band Wutiaoaren to perform and screened *Little Flower*, a film shot in Bishan.

Together with six volunteers, Zuo researched Bishan's lost handicrafts and tea production process. He found that public life in Bishan was once quite rich: the village had eight basketball courts and two theaters, as well as its own

Huangmei opera troupe with actors of all ages.

It strengthened Zuo's determination to rejuvenate the village.

However, Zuo is not optimistic about Bishan's education system. The decision to close its primary schools and merge it with county school was especially damaging. Most children in Bishan can only study at Sunshine Home, an unlicensed school.

Zuo said that although he appreciated how the local government helped them protect old homes, he said that there is probably a big gap between what he wants to do and what the government expects him to do.

The government's goal is to boost tourism revenue while the Bishan Commune is more concerned with solving its education and pollution problems.

The second Bishan Harvestival will be held together with the 2012 Yixian International Photo Festival in November.

Though it is still uncertain what will come of the Bishan Commune, Zuo said they would continue to support public life and protect as many of Bishan's old homes as possible.

"Building up the countryside is a lifelong task," Zuo said.





CPO to launch a 100-disc concert album

By Niu Chen

Love classical music? The China Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) is releasing a 100-disc box set of its concerts, featuring 213 classical pieces from around the world.

Most of the 105 concerts featured in the collection are from after 2008, when CPO came into its own.

"Many of CPO's concerts are great, but each concert has only about an audience of a thousand, which is a pity," said Yu Long, CPO's art director and conductor, at a September 27 press conference in 789 Art Zone. "With the album, more people will be able to share the experience."

Most of the world's leading symphony orchestras have live albums. Yu said that compared with studio recordings live albums feel more real.

"One can feel the passion and inspiration, as well as the flaws," Yu said. "Listening to edited recordings is like holding Marilyn Monroe's photo to sleep."

Most works in the album are Western pieces, with a lot of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Bruckner and Mahler. Several pieces were first performed in the Chinese mainland by the CPO, such as Handel's baroque opera *Semele*, Penderecki's *Eighth Symphony*, Wagner's *opus Tristan und Isolde*, Mahler's *Rueckert's Songs* and Liszt's *Faust Symphony*.

"There was no absolute standard in selecting the performances and works," said Li Nan, vice president of CPO. "We just chose the best."

Yu said that the selection process was long and difficult, since CPO has put on many



Yu Long, art director of CPO

concerts and collaborated with countless artists and musicians. "We had to compare different versions," he said. "Sometimes [Yu and his colleagues] had great differences [in opinion]."

But the biggest problem was copyright negotiation. CPO tried its best, but some performances by world-class musicians fail to appear in the record because they couldn't secure rights. "Examples include Yo-Yo Ma. We wanted him, but he refused because of the copyright," Yu said.

"Some musicians had agents or signed contracts with other companies," Li said. "They were reluctant to be recorded at first, but later agreed when we promised to contact them if those recordings were to be published."

Aside from those compromises, the album successfully gathered some big names in the music industry. Conductors who appear in the album include Christoph Eschenbach, Daniel Harding, Genady Rozhdestvensky and Vladimir Ashkenazy. Musicians and vocalists featured



Photo by Fan Yu

on the compilations include Vadim Repin, Renee Fleming and Barbara Bonney, as well as Chinese artists such as Kun Woo Paik, Lang Lang, Wang Yujia, Ning Feng, Wang Jian, He Hui, and Yang Xuefei.

There were many aspects to consider, but the market was not one of them.

"It's meaningless to please the market," Yu said. "If your work is not well done, you will either cheat the market or be abandoned by the market."

In addition to Western works, the album also picks up performances by renowned Chinese composers, including Chen Qigang's *Reflet d'un Temps Disparu*, Guo Wenjing's *Lament of an Empty Mountain* and Ye Xiaogang's *Song from the Earth*.

Also included is composer Zhou Long's opera *Legend of the White Snake*, which received a Pulitzer Music Award last year.

Yu said he didn't consciously favor Chinese composers. "I think I have the responsibility to promote Chinese works to a worldwide audience, but it's not simply

because they are Chinese," he said. "It's because their works have reached a certain level."

Releasing a 100-disc album is quite remarkable in China, especially for the 12-year-old CPO. "Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra (GSO) has a history of 55 years. Shanghai Symphony Orchestra (SSO) has a history of more than 130 years," Yu said. "Compared to them, CPO is very young, and the album launch will certainly gain some attention."

Yu said a 100-disc live album proves CPO's strength. "Few people have realized what CPO is capable of," he said. "It's impossible to say that CPO's performances have no flaws. But it's comparable to foreign orchestras."

Yu, who also presides as art director for GSO and SSO, said that CPO is peerless in China – even in Asia. "Some top conductors that worked with CPO were impressed by its performance."

Yu said that 80 of the 100 players in the orchestra have changed over the last 12 years, but CPO still maintains its can-do mentality.

The album is currently in the final stages of post-production. Ten vinyl records are already available, which contain CPO's best performances, including Chinese cellist Wang Jian's renditions of classics such as Richard Strauss' *Don Quixote*, and Mahler's *Third Symphony*.

"It's very common to do CD, LP and online products together in today's music industry," said Liu Da, the album's recording producer. "The world has seen a great increase in LP sales for the last several years."

Liu said the album will come out as a 100-disc box set because it's cheaper.

CPO released two albums with DG, a leading global record company, before their debut concert in 2000. This time it worked with a domestic record company, DR Classics.

Some worried about the audio quality of the live recordings and questioned CPO's choice. Liu, who is also the production director of DR Classics, said such concerns were unnecessary because today's recording technology is very mature.

Pieces in the album were recorded with a new generation of domestic sound engineers, whose technical skills and artistic ability have all reached international standards, with some even winning top prizes in international recording competitions.

"LPs were produced by a top manufacturer in Holland," Liu said. "The CDs were manufactured by Sony DADC in Austria."

DR Classics will continue its cooperation with CPO for the 2012-13 performance season.

Authentic Malaysian at good prices

By Annie Wei

For diners in search of authentic food at affordable prices, the newly opened Nanyang Xiaozhen serves southeast Asian cuisine and is recommended for presenting true Malaysian flavors.

The restaurant is a small neighborhood eatery inside East Fourth Ring Road, south of Palm Spring and Chaoyang Park.

The most recommended dish is the Wo Dan Ho (23 yuan), a classic rice noodle with eggs, shrimps and juicy sauce.

Sambai tumis shipped from Malaysia is also great. It's a sauce that every Malaysian family has, made of a dozen kinds of chilies, dry shrimps and mussels.

"When you order Nasi Lemak, a coconut milk cooked rice, you must pair

it with Sambai tumis," said Zhang Jintai, a Malaysian finance investor.

Zhang said the restaurant did many dishes in the right way – details that only someone who lives in Southeast Asia for a long time can spot. "I hope it can persist the authenticity, instead of altering them to cater local flavors."

We tried its curry fish head (120 yuan), the most expensive dish on the menu and a must-have for tasting southeast flavors.

It came out in a big serving – a big fish head cut in two, okra, eggplants and chilies soaked in curry sauce. The fish was tender, and the vegetables with sauces were delicious.

Please note that the dish requires 30 minutes to prepare.

We also ordered Nyonya

tofu (16 yuan), minced ingredients tucked in a tofu pie and fried. Other dishes recommended online by the owners and diners include special chicken wings (18 yuan); Bak Kut The (32 yuan), soup cooked with herbs, garlic and pork ribs for many hours; simmered bean curd and prawns with oyster sauce (28 yuan), red curry chicken (32 yuan) and Penang Rojak (18 yuan), a fruit salad topped with thick dark prawn paste.

At the end, the restaurant serves free desserts, including yam and sweet potato cubes with coconut milk and sago.

Nanyang Xiaozhen

Where: 1F, Rujia Hotel, 7 Yanjing Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 11 am – 10 pm
Tel: 6530 1687



Curry fish head, 120 yuan

Photo by Teng Chuan

Beer during workday lunch?

By Annie Wei

A decade ago, there was one go-to beerhouse for exotic beers: Paulaner Brauhaus. The list has expanded substantially since then.

Places such as El Nido, Beer Mania, Heaven, Great Leap Brewing and others head a long list of places that offer interesting imports.

But these are all places best visited after work. If you're looking for a midday drink around Chaoyangmen Wai, try Hopfenstube, a new brewing house and German restaurant that opened next to Crowne Plaza earlier this year.

Hopfenstube has a small terrace, making it unique among the area's office buildings and fast-food restaurants.

Many customers might think it small, but walking in, you'll find that it's actually quite spacious, decorated with beer-making equipment. It's an ideal place for lunch and sorts of gatherings.

For 58 yuan, you can get one main course or pasta with salad and soft drink or coffee.

There are plenty of classic German dishes to choose from. For appetizers, you can try obazda (68 yuan), a traditional Bavarian spread made of cream cheese blended with onions, cucumbers and tomatoes accompanied by German bread; or auswahl an aufschnitt (88 yuan), a selection of five German cold cuts including ham served with homemade pickled vegetables.

The Gebratene Schweinshaxe (228 yuan for two people) with pork knuckle, a crispy hind of grain-fed pork served with bread dumplings and sauerkraut, can in fact serve three or four diners.

The most recommended dish is the home hamburger (108 yuan), around 250 grams



Home hamburger, 108 yuan



Fried salmon, 168 yuan

Photos by Teng Chuan

of beef burger with melted cheese, farm fresh fried egg, tomatoes, pickles, crispy lettuce and topped off with caramelized onion, served with fries, onion rings and dips.

The restaurant has four beers – light, dark, white and seasonal (48 yuan for 300 milliliters).

Starting this month, Hopfenstube has offered a special seasonal beer brewed using a technique called bottom fermentation. The beer, 5 percent by alcohol, comes out with a citrus aroma and a strong touch of malt.

Hopfenstube

Where: 1F, Crowne Plaza Beijing Chaoyang U-Town, Dong Erhuan Lu

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Tel: 5909 6683

Pearson Longman English World

are / do

- ✗ Are you want to go camping?
✓ Do you want to go camping?

The statement 'you want' has no auxiliary verb, so to make a question, 'do' is added in front of the subject 'you'.

do / are

- ✗ Do you excited about your new pet?
✓ Are you excited about your new pet?

The statement would be 'you are excited', so to make a question, the main verb 'are' is moved in front of the subject 'you'.

Exercise

Choose 'are' or 'do':

- _____ you think this will work?
- _____ you pleased about this news?
- _____ they enjoy sleeping in tents?

Answers: 1. Do 2. Are 3. Do



Book title:

Common English Errors in Hong Kong (New Edition) 是一本专门为香港初、中级英文水平的学生所编写的自学教材。本书指出并纠正大量本地学生所常犯的英文文法与字法使用上的错误，并附有非常生动活泼的插图，深受青少年学生的青睐。

资料来源: Language Leader (Pre-intermediate) by Ian Lebeau and Gareth Rees (Pearson Longman)

Easy home decor shopping downtown

By Annie Wei

As the season changes, it's time to update your home interior: perhaps with a new set of drapes, a cozier cover for the sofa or a snazzy new blanket to stave off wintry moods.

This week, we visited the new store for Piin, a home decor brand from Taiwan that just opened at U-Town Chaoyang.

Piin was established in 2004 with the idea of mixing Western living with Eastern aesthetics, and to give customers a relaxing shopping experience.

The store claims to have original products imported from 20 countries. Its diverse catalogues include a wide range of items for living, dining, working, bathing and outdoor life.



Pu and wood sofa, 4,280 yuan



Small wood drawers, 458 yuan



Photo frame, 185 yuan



Mirror, 268 yuan



Small case made of PU and wood, 650 yuan



Cow leather bench, 1,980 yuan



Iron fan, 450 yuan



Iron plane, 580 yuan



Vase, 595 yuan



Inside Piin

Piin

Where: 3F, U-Town, Sanfeng Bei Lu, Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8562 5325

Photos by Lu Di